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Did Libby's Lies Cost Kerry the White House? Answer: No!

By Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair

How many times can the Democrats get away with saying, "Faked intelligence! We're shocked, shocked! If we'd only known that, why, we might have come out against the war in… in… well, maybe by November, 2004."

The Democrats are now howling in Congress for yet another investigation into the fictions the Bush administration engineered to justify the attack on Iraq in 2003. This follows on their forcing of a "closed debate" in the Senate on the failure of Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas to deliver the second part of his report on intelligence failures before the invasion.

We can understand why the Democrats are spinning their wheels in what must by now be the most exhaustively documented chronicle of government deception in the history of the Republic. These endless investigations help them avoid the more challenging question of where they now stand on a war to which over 60 per cent of the American people are now opposed.

As a matter of record, as readers of *CounterPunch* well know, by the fall of 2002 the fakery about Saddam's supposed drive from the late 1990s to acquire nuclear weapons and the alleged alliance with Al Qaeda had been exposed as fictions.

By early 2003 the CIA/UNSCOM debriefings of Saddam's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel had surfaced in *Newsweek*. In the 1995 debriefing in Amman, Kamel, the man who ran Saddam's WMD program, detailed his compliance with Saddam's orders in the early 1990s to destroy everything in Iraq's WMD arsenal. The Clinton administration knew of these

(**Libby** *continued on page 2)*

The Core of Zionism

By MICHAEL NEUMANN

This month CounterPunch Books publishes Michael Neumann's The Case Against Israel, a bracing and tightly argued counterblast to the nonsense peddled by Alan Dershowitz in The Case For Israel. What follows is Neumann's core thesis. We strongly encourage CounterPunchers to order this book. Call Becky Grant or Deva Wheeler at 800-840-3683 or email us. See the order form in the CounterPunch appeal, in this newsletter. Incidentally, those CounterPunchers who thought that Dershowitz could sink no lower after he proposed torture warrants may care know that Yes, the Prof. has sunk deeper into slime. Only his nose now shows. For months he tried to suppress Norman Finkelstein's onslaught on his rotten book. Rewarded with failure, he claims that Norman Finkelstein's late mother, a concentration camp survivor, was a kapo [that is, a Nazi collaborator]! AC/JSC.

What matters for an understanding of the Israel/Palestine conflict is what the expression 'a Jewish state' would mean to any reasonable person. What, in particular, could the Palestinians reasonably expect when they heard that such a state was to be established in Palestine?

The *state itself* – the human community – is, everywhere in the world, an absolute dictator bound neither by morality nor by law. Even in the most impeccable democracy, there are ways to institute anything humans can do to one another. Frequently, as in the case of the democratic Weimar Republic of Germany, just invoking emergency legislation is quite enough to open the gates of hell.

For the Zionists to demand a state, any state, was therefore no small thing for anyone – like the Palestinians – falling within its proposed boundaries. But what the Zionists demanded was a *Jewish* state. Whether this was racism is not of any immediate concern. For one thing, to say that something is racist is not, for many people, immediately to say that it is unjustified: there are those, for instance, who accept affirmative action as 'reverse' racism yet still defend it. For another, the project might have begun as racist yet outgrown its racism by instituting sufficient protections for non-Jews. Or it might not have outgrown it altogether, but exhibited a form of racism that, though reprehensible, was not particularly virulent. It, therefore, does not seem particularly fruitful to examine whether Zionism was racism.

When a state is described in relation to the territory it controls, its ethnic character is open. The French state is not necessarily a state for some ethnic group called Frenchmen, just as the Belgian or Yugoslav or Jamaican state weren't states for ethnic groups of that name. But a Catholic state would be a state run by Catholics; a black state would be a state run by blacks; a heterosexual state would be run by heterosexuals. This could hardly be clearer: what would be Catholic or black or heterosexual about a state not run by at least some members of those groups?

When, as in the post-World-War-I era, the ideology of self-determination added to the picture, the expectation develops further. Now it is that ethnic states would be run not just by *members* of their ethnic groups, but in some sense by those ethnic groups *themselves*. At the very least, such states would be governed in the *name* of those group members in the area. This would amount to something more than a formality. Thus, an Armenian state would be not simply have Armenian rulers. These rulers would truly govern in the name of Armenians. They would not just *claim* to act for their Ar-

(**Zionism** *continued on page 3)*

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debriefs too, but simply tightened sanctions and persisted in spreading the myth about Saddam's efforts to build up Iraq's WMD program.

The Democrats plainly feel they can run their current game of Gotcha! right through to the midterm elections and maybe even the trial of Scooter Libby, with Vice President Cheney on the witness stand being grilled by Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald.

Nixon's White House lawyer, John Dean, is arguing somewhat persuasively from a close reading of the indictment and ensuing press conference that Fitzgerald has Cheney in his sights and his likely intent to throw the Espionage Act at Cheney for divulging to Libby, his chief of staff, Valerie Plame's employment by the CIA.

Barely had Fitzgerald stepped away from the microphone after his press conference the day his grand jury handed down the indictment of Libby before liberal columnists like Tom Oliphant of the *Boston Globe* and Robert Scheer of the *Los Angeles Times* were seizing on one of Fitzgerald's remarks that if Libby had not lied, his investigation would have been over in October of 2004, on the eve of the presidential election.

From this jumping-off point the columnists concoct the following scenario : Libby lied and thus obstructed the investigation in order to drag Fitzgerald's probe past Election Day.

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If Libby had simply told the truth, Fitzgerald would have indicted Libby and Rove in a deluge of publicity that would have cost Bush the election.

The problem with this theory is that there's no evidence that Fitzgerald would have brought any indictments in late 2004 on the leaking of Plame's name. He could have, and most likely would have, closed up shop without even issuing a report. After all, a year later, there were no counts in Libby's indictment addressing the substantive matter of breaches in the law, part of U.S. Title 18, criminalizing the naming CIA employees. Even though his indictment of Libby sketches out a conspiracy, Fitzgerald did not avail himself of this legal lasso relished by all prosecutors.

Fitzgerald may well have concluded that the outing of Plame by Libby and Rove simply wasn't a crime, which means there would have been no history changing indictments in late 2004. It was only by the fall of 2005 that Fitzgerald got Cooper of *Time* magazine and Judith Miller of the *New York Times* to testify to the grand jury. Indeed it was only when the *New York Times* turned over Miller's notebook the Libby's indictment for perjury, lying and obstruction of justice became a likelihood.

So you could argue that maybe the journalists' refusal to testify saved Bush-Cheney in 2004. We don't agree with that, because we don't think that an indictment of Libby would have prompted enough voters in Ohio to vote for John Kerry.

In fact the Democrats didn't use Plamegate at all in late 2004, any more than they made an issue of faked intelligence. They simply said they could fight the war better.

Should Libby's Lawyer Be Disbarred?

By Lawrence Velvel

Unless there were some such universal cover-up, Fitzgerald *must* know a good deal, in his role as a prosecutor, about what the underlying purpose of the outing was, what its basic motivation was. And now that Libby has been indicted, the pressure will be on him to cut a deal to shorten his sentence, and possibly to avoid a second indictment on the underlying substantive charge, by revealing more. There will also be pressure on other Administration figures who are involved to cut a deal in order to avoid the possibility that *they* may be indicted or listed as unindicted co-conspirators. (One thinks of people like Rove, conceivably David Addington, who is known to be ferociously savage to those who oppose his view, or conceivably John Hannah.) All of this remains in the bosom of the future, of course. But if Fitzgerald was telling the truth about the need to learn underlying purposes during an investigation — and so far he has given the impression of being one of the few involved in high level Washington matters who does not prevaricate or lie — then there is bound to be more to come. As the reporters say, stay tuned.

The indictment says that Libby's lawyer was present at two meetings in which Libby was questioned by and lied to the FBI. Did Libby's lawyer know the truth, sit there quietly while listening to Libby lie, and never subsequently insure that Libby recanted his lies? This is hard to believe because, if it were true, the lawyer could be severely punished, conceivably even disbarred.

Or did the lawyer not know the truth? Had Libby lied to him too, or was the lawyer ignorant of the truth because he had not even prepared Libby for the meeting with the FBI, had not demanded that Libby show him relevant documents, and did not know before the interview what Libby was going to say?

If the lawyer had not prepared Libby, had not determined what he was going to say and questioned him about it, had not demanded to see relevant documents, then he was derelict in his performance, I would say. (Claims that executive privilege make some or all of this impossible for the lawyer are just so much cant in my opinion, especially since the lawyer could be made to agree not to disclose classified information.)

And if the lawyer, for whatever reason, did not know that Libby had lied, what did he do when he found this out, as he must have because the prosecutor almost certainly told him what the charges would be before the indictment was brought, and doubtlessly gave Libby one or more last chances to clear the record. When he found it out, did the lawyer advise Libby to come clean? Did he, rather, in effect say, "Okay Scooter, whatever you want, we'll defend it one way or another, regardless of whether it's true or false"?

Several of these possible scenarios involve malpractice and dereliction of duty, especially since a lawyer who investigated and demanded the truth from the client could have headed off a lot of trouble.

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(**Zionism** *continued from page 1*)

menian subjects or citizens, but would genuinely rule on their behalf, that is, for their benefit. The Armenian inhabitants might – and from Wilson's standpoint, would – be governed democratically, *by* themselves. If not, one would hope and expect that they would be governed *for* themselves, or *for*, in the interests of, Armenians as a whole.

A Jewish state would, therefore, be a state run by and *for* Jews. In such a state, Jews would be sovereign. The state would be run in their interests.

For non-Jews to expect as much was and is, therefore, entirely reasonable. Only a consistent, ongoing, highly public campaign to explain that this was certainly not going to happen would be sufficient to dispel this expectation. Nothing remotely like that occurred. So, it is worth reviewing what living under Jewish sovereignty must mean.

It means that Jews have a monopoly on violence in the areas they control. The perceived legitimacy of this monopoly need go no further than a settled expectation familiar to Star Trek fans: resistance is futile. A Jewish state is simply a state where Jews are firmly in control and where that much is recognized. Within its borders, Jews hold the power of life and death over Jews and non-Jews alike. That is the true meaning of the Zionist project.

If that's what the project is and was, there are a lot of things it wasn't. The Jews who came to Palestine as individuals and in small groups had various motives. But the overall direction of the Zionist movement, the ultimate goal to which all these individuals and groups would be directed and the one which it would in fact achieve, is something else again. Most accounts of the settlement do not focus on this ultimate purpose, and are therefore misleading. The Zionists and their camp followers did not come simply to settle. They did not come simply to 'find a homeland', certainly not in the sense that Flanders is the homeland of the Flemish, or Lappland of the Lapps. They did not come simply to 'make a life in Palestine'. They did not come simply to find a refuge from persecution. They did not come to 'redeem a people'. All this could have been done elsewhere, as was pointed out at the time, and much of it was being done elsewhere by individual Jewish immigrants to America and other countries. The Zionists, and therefore all who settled under their auspices, came to found a sovereign Jewish state.

In this state, however tolerant, however easygoing, however joyful, however liberal, Jews would always have the final say, on everything. Affairs would be run in the interests of whatever its rulers or inhabitants considered the interests of the Jewish people. Within that state, the final decision on how much force was to be used to advance those interests was entirely in the hands of its Jewish occupants. This does not have to mean that non-Jews had no representation, no say at all. It does not mean that non-Jews had no civil rights, or that their human rights would necessarily be violated. But it does mean that – since it is the essence of a Zionist state to be Jewish, run by and for Jews – things would always be arranged so that sovereignty remained in Jewish hands. This might be by law or it might be by political manipulation; it might be *de jure* or *de facto*. So it would be for Jews alone to decide whether non-Jews had civil rights, whether their human rights would be honored, indeed whether they would live or die. The purpose of establishing a sovereign Jewish state may or may not have been domination; that doesn't matter. That would certainly be the effect of its establishment.

Within its borders, Jews hold the power of life and death over Jews and non-Jews alike. That is the true meaning of the Zionist project.

What then of the claims that Zionism wasn't necessarily the demand for a sovereign Jewish state? Certainly, there were people who called themselves Zionists and who demanded something else, though what it was always remained obscure. There was talk of a state; its mechanisms never clearly defined. There was talk of a homeland guaranteed by international powers, or simply a homeland. It would be correct to say that not all Jewish settlers demanded a Jewish state, and that some of these settlers considered themselves Zionists. It would be incorrect to say that the Zionist project or enterprise was anything less than an attempt to establish a Jewish State.

In the first place, we have seen that a Jewish state was the objective of the Zionist leadership and the mainstream Zionist movement. Second, by the time 'nonexclusive' Zionism had become visible, in the 1920s, its notions of cooperation with the Palestinians had already become unworkable. Too much blood had been shed: the 1921 Jaffa riots had taken 200 Jewish and 120 Palestinian lives, followed in 1929 by the killing of 207 Jews and 181 Palestinians in Hebron. A contemporary Jewish comment on the first serious anti-Jewish riots, in 1920, already asserts that in Palestine there was a general understanding that Zionism would mean a Jewish state, and that this understanding ushered in bloodshed:

"...we all know how the [Balfour] Declaration was interpreted at the time of its publication, and how much exaggeration many of our workers and writers have tried to introduce into it from that day to this. The Jewish people listened, and believed that the end of the *galush* [exile] had indeed come, and that in a short time there would be a 'Jewish state.' The Arab people too... listened, and believed that the Jews were coming to expropriate its land and do with it what they liked. All this inevitably led to friction and bitterness on both sides, and contributed to the state of things which was revealed in all its ugliness in the events at Jerusalem last April [1920]. " (Ahad Ja'Am [Asher Ginzberg], "After the Balfour Declaration", 1920, reprinted in Gary Smith, ed., *Zionism: The Dream and the Reality*, London 1974.)

The British showed as little capacity or indeed inclination to curb the ethnic violence as they were to show in India and many other possessions. I know of no case in which cooperation between ethnic communities followed anytime soon on massacres of this scale. Third, even most 'nonexclusive' Zionists were not distinguished by an explicit renunciation of a Jewish state, but rather by a commitment to partition Palestine rather than go for the whole thing. By then, the Palestinians correctly saw that the main tendency of Zionism was to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the intentions of a tiny nonexclusive minority with nebulous plans for some implausibly cooperative two-people government had no point of contact with the political realities. This is probably why the 'nonexclusives' remained, in the words of Norman Finkelstein, "numerically weak and politically marginal." CP

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"Massacre" or Massacre?

Smearing 101, in *The Guardian*

By Alexander Cockburn

After *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines issued their readers' poll last month of the top intellectuals in the world, I broached to Noam Chomsky the notion that *CounterPunch* might compile an alternative list. The plan was to dismiss *FP/Prospect* (readers' pick of mostly lumpen non-thinkers in favor of real intellectuals like Levi-Strauss, or Tom Szasz, or Laura Nader, or Barbara Fields, or Pierre Sprey, or…

Chomsky featured in the poll as top intellectual (with twice as many votes as the runner-up, Umberto Eco, to the evident consternation of much of the north-eastern U.S. press that has mostly kept silent on the matter). (Some of the lumpen non-thinkers like Christopher Hitchens were shameless enough to solicit votes on their own websites.)

Chomsky wrote me back in good humor, ridiculing the idea of such lists and putting forward as candidates his granddaughter in Nicaragua, or his granddaughter's cat. The notion of listing intellectuals soon grew wearisome, and I moved on to other matters.

But the pre-eminence of a genuinely radical thinker like Chomsky plainly irked Blairite types at the British daily newspaper, *The Guardian*. The editor of the relevant section, Ian Katz, is not known for his left-wing sympathies and rumored to be the next editor of *The Guardian*. Katz has regularly filled his pages with columns from war enthusiasts. He duly sent off an interviewer to do a razor job on the professor of linguistics at MIT.

In recent years, the "interview" as a showcase for the interviewer's inquisitorial chutzpa has been more a feature of English than of American daily journalism. *The Guardian*'s current showcase performer in what is essentially a game of self-promotion (displaying the interviewer as more than a match for the interviewee) is a woman named Emma Brockes, fairly new to the game but already feted as a high-flier.

Last year Brockes interviewed the black British poet, Benjamin Zephaniah, after he refused a medal offered him in the annual Queen's honor list. Towards the end of the piece, Brockes asked Zephaniah what he was reading:

"'Chomsky,' he says. 'I am always reading Chomsky.' I tell him I find Chomsky hard work. 'Really?' he says. 'Really? That's cos you ain't got a Birmingham accent.' And he throws back his head and brays like a donkey."

This is a nice illustration of a characteristic of many of these showcase interviews, where the interviewer sneaks in a kidney punch after the interview is over, when she's safely back in the office. So the readers are left to warm their hands over the rancid and somehow racist snap of "brays like a donkey".

For* Guardian *readers, a man who denies that a massacre took place at Srebrenica is not one who deserves to be voted the top intellectual on the planet.

Of course Brockes knows when to mind her manners. She did an interview with Ariel Sharon in 2001, replete with such challenging interrogatories as:

"I wonder how Sharon would go about capturing Bin Laden if he was commanding Britain's special forces? (As a 25-year-old he commanded Special Unit 101, which undertook just this sort of operation.)"

Brockes doesn't explain to the readers at this point what Special Unit 101 – one of the most notorious death squads of the twentieth century – actually got up to. She opts instead for tremulous insights such as:

"It is tempting to speculate that the personal risk that Sharon has lived under for practically all of his life has influenced his political decision-making."

Her ignorance is pervasive. Barak, she dutifully writes, "offered Arafat withdrawal from Gaza, most of the West Bank and a share of Jerusalem, greater concessions than had ever been offered".

Finally, in the twentieth paragraph she addresses, or claims she addresses, the darker side of General Sharon. She mentions, or says she mentioned, the massacre at Qibya in 1953, the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the massacres at the refugee camps. The moment of confrontation has arrived. As rapidly, it departs.

"Sharon tutts dismissively. 'They can accuse us as much as they want to." The car stops. 'You want to see some sheep?'"

And off they go, very cozily, to count sheep. (Or maybe they weren't very cozy, just cozy, or maybe the relationship was only superficially cozy, but fundamentally brittle. I insert the "very" and "cozy" just to show how easy it is to load the dice in this sort of game.)

Another way to load the dice, much favored by Brockes, is to lure the reader on with an assumption touted as part of some general consensus instead of being a spiteful and unargued assumption of the writer. Brockes handed this treatment out to another fierce critic of imperial America, Gore Vidal. Her interview with Vidal in Italy was published in *The Guardian* in September, 2005.

"Vidal's own insights, however wise, are widely perceived these days to be the fruits of a relentless superiority complex. I wonder how aware of this he is. He snorts.'What form does that take?' Never admitting to being wrong. 'Yes, I do. I think it's because I speak in complete sentences. That's considered un-American.' When was the last time he admitted he was wrong? 'All the time. All the time. … I think any reflective person is going to realize that he makes a lot of mistakes.'"

But is it "widely perceived" that Vidal's insights are derived "from a relentless superiority complex"? Of course not.

As with Chomsky, Brockes' game is set up and edit her interviews so that the reader never has a chance to say, "Yes, these are two radical critics of the American Empire whom current events have proved to be ab-

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solutely correct in their analysis and their moral and political stance." If Brockes had interviewed Bertrand Russell in 1917, she would have dwelt nastily on his class origins, his personal relationship, and skipped entirely over the matter of Russell going to prison for opposing the horrors of the First World War.

The contrast between the decorous treatment of a genuine, full-bore war criminal like Sharon and Brockes' tetchy malevolence and dishonesties in her piece about Chomsky is very marked.

You can get the drift from the deck of headlines and sub-heads with which *the Guardian*'s editors introduced Brockes' piece:

The greatest intellectual?

Q: Do you regret supporting those who say the Srebrenica massacre was exaggerated?

A: My only regret is that I didn't do it strongly enough.

As we'll see, this is a carefully considered overture to the set-up.

After some very childish bric-a-brac about an open packet of fig rolls on Chomsky's desk ("is it wrong to mention the fig rolls when there is undocumented suffering going on in El Salvador?"), it isn't long before Brockes swerves into her predetermined trajectory, to the effect that :

"…his [Chomsky's] conclusions remain controversial: that practically every U.S. president since the Second World War has been guilty of war crimes; that in the overall context of Cambodian history, the Khmer Rouge weren't as bad as everyone makes out; **that during the Bosnian war the 'massacre' at Srebrenica was probably overstated. (Chomsky uses quotations marks to undermine things he disagrees with and, in print at least, it can come across less as academic than as witheringly teenage; like, Srebrenica was so not a massacre.)"**

Read those sentences in bold type carefully. Brockes is claiming that Chomsky had, in reference to Srebrenica, put the word massacre in quotation marks, thus deprecating the idea that it was, in fact, a massacre. There's no other way to construe the sentences. Here's "massacre" in its quote marks, and then in the next sentence "Chomsky uses quotation marks to undermine things he disagrees with…" Next comes Brockes' summary of Chomsky's position, identified by use of the "witheringly teenage" quote marks: "Srebrenica was so not a massacre."

Now, this is no little parlor game Brockes is engaged in here. For *Guardian* readers, a man who denies that a massacre took place at Srebrenica is not one who deserves to be voted the top intellectual on the planet. The opening headlines set Chomsky up, and the quote marks round the word massacre knock him down.

But there's no sentence in which Chomsky has ever suggested with the use of those quotation marks that a massacre in Srebrenica did not take place. There are passages, easy to find, in which Chomsky most definitely says it was a massacre. Brockes is faking it.

Brockes backs away from the set-up for a few paragraphs and retails the standard Chomsky bio. Then she swerves back, on the theme of Chomsky being asked "to lend his name to all sorts of crackpot causes":

"As some see it, one ill-judged choice of cause was the accusation made by *Living Marxism* magazine that during the Bosnian war shots used by ITN [Independent Television News] of a Serb-run detention camp were faked. The magazine folded after ITN sued, but the controversy flared up again in 2003 when a journalist called Diane Johnstone made similar allegations in a Swedish magazine, *Ordfront* , taking issue with the official number of victims of the Srebrenica massacre. (She said they were exaggerated.) In the ensuing outcry, Chomsky lent his name to a letter praising Johnstone's 'outstanding work'. Does he regret signing it?

'No,' he says indignantly. 'It is outstanding. My only regret is that I didn't do it strongly enough. It may be wrong; but it is very careful and outstanding work.'"

Now we can see where those opening headlines were drawn from, and the context comes into focus. Chomsky's point concerns his expressed support for Diana (not, as Brockes has it, Diane) Johnstone's work. And as readers of our *CounterPunch* site will know from Johnstone's two excellent recent pieces on Srebrenica, Johnstone never for one moment says there wasn't a massacre there. She simply provides a factual historical sequence and context that many find disturbing, and politically inconvenient.

From what Brockes presents as her ensuing argument with Chomsky, it's clear that she doesn't know much about the *Living Marxism*/ITN affair, which in fact was an entirely separate case, which occurred well before Srebrenica.

Throughout the interview, incidentally, Brockes spectacularly fails to mention Iraq – perhaps because it would reveal a poor showing for Chomsky's detractors.

She spends much of the final portion displaying herself as the advocate of journalistic truth against Chomsky, whom she takes care to depict as peevish and irritable. Her pay-off is of a cheapness and insolent vulgarity that brings to mind her line about Zephaniah braying like a donkey.

"Does he [Chomsky] have a share portfolio? He looks cross. 'You'd have to ask my wife about that. I'm sure she does. I don't see any reason why she shouldn't. Would it help people if I went to Montana and lived on a mountain? It's only rich, privileged westerners – who are well educated and therefore deeply irrational – in whose minds this idea could ever arise. When I visit peasants in southern Colombia, they don't ask me these questions.' I suggest that people don't like being told off about their lives by someone they consider a hypocrite."

That's what a simple-living and – by common agreement, selfless – 76-year professor gets for letting an ambitious "interviewer" into his office for an hour.

Brockes' interview ran on October 31. The next day *The Guardian* ran a couple of letters of complaint about Brockes' manifest bias and spite. Chomsky wrote immediately, outlining in detail Brockes' "fabrications", a word *The Guardian*'s ombudsman, Ian Mayes, adamantly refused to allow into print, under the preposterous claim by *The Guardian*'s lawyers that this would

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invite litigation. From whom? Brockes would sue her own paper?

Finally, in what Chomsky himself regards as a piece of journalistic chicanery even more outrageous than Brockes' smear, *The Guardian* printed his edited letter of complaint "paired," as Chomsky put it later, "with a letter from a survivor from Bosnia, which, as the editors certainly know, is based entirely on lies in the faked 'interview' they published. The title: "Falling out over Srebrenica." As Chomsky says, "There was no Srebrenica debate, and they know it perfectly well. I never mentioned it, except to repeatedly try to explain to Brockes that I opposed the withdrawal of Johnstone's book under dishonest press attacks that were all lies, as I showed in the open letter I mentioned. And it had nothing to do with the scale of the Srebrenica massacre, as again they all know."

The Guardian's editor, Alan Rusbridger, is now trying to brush aside complaints about his newspaper's scandalous misrepresentations as left-wing cavils of no consequence. As I write this, the newspaper has not published Diana Johnstone's eloquent letter of complaint, portions of which I quote here:

"Paris, November 5, 2005

"To the editors of *The Guardian*

"Ms. Brockes writes that the *LM* report was 'proven' to be false in a court of law. In fact, ITN put *LM* out of business by winning a libel suit against the magazine. But due to the quaint nature of British libel law, the decisive issue in court was NOT the truth about the wire fence. Rather, it was whether or not the ITN reporters had 'deliberately' sought to deceive the public. The issue becomes one of intentions and emotions. The judge, in his summing up, acknowledged that the ITN team reporters were mistaken as to who was enclosed by the old barbed-wire fence, adding, 'but does it matter?' The jury decided it did not.

"I never said anything about the intentions of the ITN journalists. In my book, *Fools' Crusade* (Pluto Press, 2002), I refer to the famous 'thin man behind barbed wire' photo, to point out the way the photo was interpreted by world media to create the impression that what was happening in Bosnia was a repetition of the Nazi Holocaust… Ms. Brockes neglects to mention my book, or the fact that publication of my book, and not some hypothetical statement about some particular fact, was what Chomsky – among others – defended.

"Neither I nor Professor Chomsky have ever denied that Muslims were the main victims of atrocities and massacres committed in Bosnia. But I insist that the tragedy of Yugoslav disintegration cannot be reduced to such massacres, and that there are other aspects of the story, historical and political, that deserve to be considered…. The hasty application of the term 'genocide' is exploited to justify military intervention, which occurs only when it suits United States geopolitical purposes and which on balance makes bad situations worse. Prevention of an imaginary 'genocide' in Kosovo was the pretext for the United States to establish the precedent of unauthorized military intervention, convert NATO to a new mission of 'humanitarian intervention', and thereby reaffirm U.S. supremacy in Europe after the end of the Cold War. When no 'weapons of mass destruction' are found, 'humanitarian intervention' to overthrow the 'genocidal' Saddam Hussein becomes the retroactive excuse for the invasion of Iraq. And what next...?

Diana Johnstone"

How much does *The Guardian's* hit-and-run job on Chomsky matter? Enough, in my view, to warrant detailed inspection. Chomsky's enemies have often opted for these artful onslaughts in which he's set up as somehow an apologist for monstrosity, instead of being properly identified as one of the most methodical and tireless dissectors and denouncers of monstrosity of our era. Their contemptible tactics should be seen for what they are. Rusbridger and his editors are far, far beyond reform in their low practices. Maybe young Brockes will clean up her act, though I doubt it. Chomsky's mistake, when he realized that Brockes had arrived with a malign agenda was not to have suggested they go look at the sheep, of which there are thousands grazing placidly around Harvard and MIT. Sharon knew how to handle her better.

We ran an earlier version of this on the CounterPunch website, but I want our non-site reading newsletter readers to know about this bit of skullduggery in a newspaper which still has a few decent reporters working for it, like Jonathan Steele, though in the main it has slid a long way down hill. AC.

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